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THE VALLEY OF THE LOIRE

AND ITS

HISTORIC CHATEAUX.

BY

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The Loire, the largest river of France, rises near Gerbier des Jones in the wild Cevennes, Department of the Ardèche, from a height of 4,711 feet above the sea, whence it winds its sinuous way, for more than 600 miles, to the Atlantic. It has many tributaries, the chief being the Allier, Cher, Indre, Vienne, Maine, and Seore, which, together, drain one-fourth of the area of France. This vast Loire basin, geologically, physiognomically and historically, belongs to three distinct regions. The Upper-Loire is a romantic mountain torrent, running northwardly to its junction with the Allier. The united waters of these two rivers, constituting the Middle-Loire, flow in a wide valley, from near Nevers, to Tours, in a semi-circular course, through what is justly called the "Garden of France," its soil being made up of sands, clays and marls, like the tertiary lake-basins of Paris. The Lower-Loire, running westwardly, after excavating a wide bed in the schists of Angers, flows through the granite regions of Poitou and Brittany and enters the Bay of Biscay by a wide estuary below St. Nazaire.

The rapidity of the Loire's flood current and the mountainous character of the region of its upper waters, cause the vast quantities of gravel, sand and alluvium, brought

down, to form bars and obstacles to its flow. To obviate these difficulties, large sums of money and much engineering skill have been expended to improve its navigation. The left bank is usually the steepest from the earth's rotation throwing the excavating channel against it, hence the much flatter right bank requires protecting levees. These embankments, among the most stupendous works of France, were begun as early as the ninth century, and gradually were enlarged till they are now about 25 feet high and 40 at the base, along the whole middle course of the Loire from Nevers to Angers. These barriers usually confine the river within its banks and exclude its waters from a tract of country 100 miles long and 30 to 40 in breadth, which was formerly a morass. However, the narrow channel, less than a thousand feet wide, is at times insufficient to hold the accumulated waters, which sometimes burst their bounds and spread wide their devastating floods, as in 1841, 1856 and 1866. This seems impossible to those who, like ourselves, looked in Summer upon this sluggish streamlet, more of sand than water. Half of the year navigation is interrupted by droughts, overflows and ice ; but during the other half navigation is practicable downwards from Noirie, and upwards to Roanne. The tide is perceptible above Nantes, and vessels of 300 tons can discharge at Paimbœuf. The navigation of the Lower-Loire, much obstructed by shifting sands, is assisted by the *Canal lateral à la Loire* ; and canals also connect this stream with the Saône, Seine, and Vilaine.

This great river, which nearly equally divides France, possesses important strategic advantages for the realm ; and, in and near its basin, have been the battle-grounds of great contending hosts. The Franks passed through this

region when warring against Aquitania and the Visigoth kingdom, destroyed by the decisive battle of Vouillé in which Clovis slew Alaric ; it was at Miré, near Tours, that Charles Martel defeated Abderrahman, thereby rescuing Christendom from Moslem domination ; at Poitiers was fought one of those great battles of the Hundred Years' War for the succession of England to the throne of France ; at Orleans Joan of Arc entered the city, in 1429, in the teeth of the vastly superior English army ; along the Loire are those famous Chateaux so memorable in the history of the Valois kings and their successors ; at Jarnac fell Condé leading his brave Protestants against the Catholics ; in the Vendée was the sanguinary struggle of three long years between Royalists and Republicans ; behind the Loire, Davoust sought refuge with the defeated army of Waterloo ; and after the battle of Villerceau or Beaugency, the great river became the barrier to the German invasion of 1870-71, and the base for French operations during the closing period of the war.

The source of the Loire is in the volcanic plateau of Velay, covered with lavas vomited from one hundred and fifty, though now scarcely distinguishable, craters. These lava streams have frequently blocked up the valley of the river, which, in scooping out a new channel, has frequently laid bare magnificent columns of basalt. One of the grandest of these defiles is that at Chamalières, a cañon excavated in granite, and basaltic lava to the depth of nearly a thousand feet. The volcanic formations, in the vicinity of picturesque Puy, of high columns of basalt, huge dykes and broad sheets of lava, are best known. Close to the black houses of the town, the "Needle" of St. Michel—an obelisk of lava—and the rock of Corneille, raise their lofty

heads. Beyond are the columns of basalt of La Denise, known as the "Cross of Straw," and the "Organ" of Espaly, where were discovered fossil remains of animals and two human skeletons, probably contemporaneous with the eruption of these extinct volcanoes. Around Le Puy, the chief industry of whose 20,000 inhabitants is the manufacture of point and blond laces, every available spot is covered with vegetation. During the Middle Ages it was a great place of pilgrimage, even for popes and kings, who often visited its venerable Romanesque cathedral, the old chapel of St. Michel, and particularly the miracle-working statue of the Virgin surmounting the summit of the rock of Corneille, 2,484 feet high. The new town, besides its public monuments, contains a valuable museum rich in local antiquities.

Passing by the dismantled walls of the Castle of Polignac, of Roche-Lambert, so admirably described by Georges Sand, and other feudal strongholds dismantled by Revolutionary fury, we leave behind us a desolate wilderness of lava-fields, savage defiles, "antres vast and deserts idle, rough quarries, rocks and hills" piled up in inextricable confusion. After seeing the deep and picturesque gorge of the Langon, a small tributary of the Loire, we meet with landscape scenery quite Alpine in character, and come to the coal basin of St. Etienne, one of the most productive in France, and giving occupation to the 120,000 inhabitants of this continental Birmingham. The whole country is alive with mills, and at Andresieux large quantities of coal are embarked on the Loire for the supply of central and western France.

Except the ruins of the old Castle of Montroud, nothing of special importance is to be seen till we reach the old

decayed town of Feurs, which occupies the site of one of the important cities of the Gauls, identified by extensive fragments of Roman walls, aqueducts, inscribed stones, &c. Six miles below, confining the Loire between huge dykes, is the Mole de Piné, faced with heavy stones cemented and clamped together, the construction of which is attributed to the Romans. The rapids thus produced prevent the ascent of boats beyond Roanne, a cotton manufacturing town, which consequently enjoys a large transit trade.

Vichy on the Allier, about thirty miles westward of the Loire, is one of the most frequented watering-places in Europe, being annually visited by about 25,000 invalids to use the waters, which vary in temperature from 57° to 113° Fahrenheit, and have, as Sam. Weller would say, a remarkable flavor of soda-water and hot flat-irons. The season begins in the middle of May and lasts till October. In the vicinity are some old castles and much picturesque scenery.

From Vichy and Roanne, the Allier and Loire, after running through an interesting region filled with busy life and memorials of past history, meet at Nivers, a place which enjoyed some importance in the time of Julius Cæsar, but now is chiefly noted as the location of the Government arsenal for the manufacture of ordnance and artillery carriages.

The Loire, here much increased in volume, winds past the ancient watch-towers and ruined monastery of La Charité; the Chateau de Courselles, once belonging to the bold Scot—Marshal Macdonald; Briare, where begins Sully's canal to the Seine; Gien, lower down, where the great minister of Henry IV. passed the latter years of his

life, and in which Voltaire wrote several cantos of the *Henriade*; the fine old church of St. Bénéoit, and the remains of the handsome Châteauneuf; and the old walls of Jarreau, to which a few English soldiers fled after the siege of Orleans, and where, in storming a breach made by the French, the Maid, mounting a ladder, was struck down by a stone into the ditch, but, recovering, carried the place banner in hand.

We have now reached the famous city of Orleans, a great commercial centre and strategic point on the Loire, through which pass great highways to southern France, Spain and Switzerland. Here we are among the blooming orchards, golden vineyards, and the waving cornfields of this granary of the nation, breathing its genial air and basking among its sunny landscapes. Orleans is now a modern town, and almost every memorial of its heroine—Joan of Arc—has been swept away, though her statue is yet in the Place des Martroy, and, near by, is her house, as are also those of Agnes Sorel and Diana of Poitiers. The cathedral, in the flamboyant Gothic style, is the finest structure in the city, and in the Mairie, close at hand, died the insignificant Francis II., husband of Mary, Queen of Scots.

Descending the willow-fringed Loire, near its left bank is the church of our Lady of Cléry, in which Louis XI. was buried; below, on the opposite bank, at Beaugency, was fought a great battle, which might have been a victory for the French but for the orders of Gambetta, then Minister of War; and at Mer we begin the tour of the famous Chateaux, with which are connected some of the glories, but more of the shame of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Chambord, the Versailles of La Touraine, is in an extensive forest park on the Cosson, a tributary of the Loire,

which was turned fifteen miles from its course to bathe the chateau's fortress walls. This grand edifice, of mingled feudal castle and sumptuous palace, was the work of the chivalrous king, Francis I., knighted by the hand of Bayard. He began the era of modern France, the great age in which occurred the Reformation, and in which lived the greatest sovereigns—Pope Leo X., the Emperor Charles V., Henry VIII. of England, the Sultan Solymán, Sigismund of Poland, &c. This, too, was the age in which the Renaissance of Greek and Roman antiquity came in, and altered the originality of the earliest productions of the Middle Ages, while it gave to literature and art a glorious impetus throughout Western Europe. The memorials and monuments of classical civilization, which were suddenly removed on the fall of the Greek Empire to Italy, Francis I., with an intuitive taste for the grand and beautiful, introduced into France after his conquests in that land of art. Their purity of design, elaborate ornamentation, wealth and beauty of color, and graceful forms delighted the sensuous soul of the royal patron of Cellini and Da Vinci, and the venerator of the genius of Michael Angelo. He had a mania for building fairy palaces, not only on lovely islands in the Indre, as we see in Azay-le-Rideau, but, even upon the sandy and humid plain of Sologne, where he erected his magnificent Chambord. In this latter turreted and moated fortress home, he lavished every device and decoration to achieve a masterly combination of all that was gay, bright and picturesque in architecture; hence it partakes more of the fanciful Italian palace than the embattled castle of the Middle Ages.

The form of this fantasy of stone, occupying the site of the sombre old fortress knocked down by Francis I., is a

rectangle over 500 feet long and nearly 400 wide, with massive towers at each angle, sixty feet in diameter. Within, in the middle of the principal front, stands the great donjon, 170 feet square, also with heavy flanking towers whose pointed roofs are surmounted with ornamental turrets. The donjon is divided, on each floor, into four equal divisions, by four *Salles des Gardes*, forming the arms of a Greek cross, at the centre or junction of which is the grand staircase with two independent flights of spiral stairways: in itself a *chef-d'œuvre* of art from its boldness, fine proportions, delicacy of details, and great elevation. Its soaring "*lanterne*" summit, some 200 feet high, crowned with a colossal stone *fleur-de-lys*, towers majestically over a forest of pinnacles, conical domes, sculptured chimneys, and bold buttresses, which, in variety and grouping, are the triumph of this architectural monument. In addition to this magnificent stairway there are in the castle twelve others to ascend to its top, besides many more in the thicknesses of its walls. It would require a volume to give an architectural anatomy of this imposing edifice which contains nearly half a thousand and spacious rooms, many of which are vast salons once filled with rich furniture, beautiful tapestries, choice books, costly pictures, and adorned with elaborate frescoes, stately sculptures and all the resources of art, of which now little remains save the initial F of the King and his salamander in flames alternating in the panels of the ceilings and roof. In pacing its deserted halls and tenantless chambers it seems impossible that here was once assembled the wit, poetry and intellect of a cultivated age; that here, in broad sombrero fringed with gold and looped up with priceless jewels, once stood Francis I., the cynosure of ad-

miring eyes ; that around him were princes in their richest embroideries, knights and courtiers habited in costliest stuffs, and ladies in Eastern silks and sparkling with rivières of emeralds and diamonds ; that here abounded every luxury, gorgeous mode and extravagant device of a sumptuous court ; and that within these walls transpired some of the most momentous events of history. It was hard to realize all this, its sybaritic pleasures and sounds of revelry by night, as we, by the glimpses of the moon, in silence wandered about this enchanted palace so symmetrical and so grand in outline, guarded on every side by Titan towers. At every turn its pinnacles and spires, bathed in lambent light, seemed a fantastic assemblage of whitened spectres stately marching across our path.

The construction of this enormous pile employed eight-hundred workmen during the whole period of the reign of Francis after his return from captivity in Spain.

“ Lord of the soil,
His palace rose and kissed the gorgeous clouds,
Streams bent their current to his will, trees sprung ;
The naked waste put on luxurious robes
And plains of happy cottages cast out
Their tenants, and became a hunting-field.”

It was in this very palace that, in 1539, the generous Francis munificently entertained his cruel jailor—Charles V. In its “Lanterne,” for an observatory, Catherine de Medici, daughter of the second tyrant of Florence, with her astrologer Ruggiero, cast the fatal horoscope of everyone inimical to this Medea of France. Here Molière and his troop performed comedies before Louis XIV. and his court. This was the asylum for eight years (1725–33) of Stanislas, King of Poland, the father-in-law of Louis XV. Here, with all the pomp and circumstance of a conquerer, lived

and died Marshal Saxe—the hero of one hundred battles, including Fontenoy, for which this chateau was his reward. Upon its priceless decorations, emblematical of royalty, the Revolutionary mob wreaked its vengeance. With this rich inheritance, under the title of the Principality of Wagram, Napoleon rewarded his Chief of Staff, Marshal Berthier, and from his widow it was purchased by a national subscription and presented to the Duc de Bordeaux, the last descendant of the elder branch of the House of Bourbon, who assumed the title of Comte de Chambord and recently died styling himself Henry V., a king only in name and with a royal residence which he never occupied.

Leaving this classic Chateau of the taste, liberality and power of the modern Augustus, we drove, on a bright May morning, along the banks of the historic Loire to the Castle of Blois, for ages the residence of princes and kings, the haunt of bigotry, and the stage of direful tragedy. It is a picturesque assemblage of the architecture of three great epochs in the thirteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. After its last occupation by the Valois kings, its towers, turrets, painted windows, and rich apartments, by degrees, became almost ruins, when Duban, under the directions of the government, restored a part of it to its pristine grandeur. It is built on the site of a Roman camp at the confluence of the Arou with the Loire, where, in feudal times, existed a strong baronial castle, whose early checkered history, from the middle of the tenth century, we will pass over. When Charles d'Orleans, captured at Agincourt, was released in 1440, this enlightened prince gave to this massive castle, no longer necessary after the evacuation by the enemy of central France, an entirely new form, converting it into an elegant abode of taste and luxury, of which

there are yet some remains. In 1462, a most important event in its history occurred, Mary of Cleves giving birth to a son who became King Louis XII. of France, called the "Father of his People." Almost all the great political acts of this wise and good sovereign were performed at the Chateau of Blois, where, except when with his army in Italy, he always lived. He, with exquisite taste, richly adorned it, added a magnificent gallery, and made a fine collection of works, which subsequently became the most precious part of the national library at Paris. Here Anne of Brittany, and Claude (wife of Francis I.) died; here, in her tower, the inscrutable, stern and cruel Catherine de Medicis, with her familiar Ruggiero, watched the stars to read the fate of thousands whom she hurried to an untimely grave; here, secret duels and assassinations occurred, and famous edicts and declarations of war were issued; here, convocations of state-councils were held and royal alliances contracted; and here, magnificent fêtes took place and the most pompous ceremonials were celebrated. But of all the terrible tragedies at which humanity shudders, here took place the brutal murder, December 23, 1588, of the Duke de Guise, the head of the Catholic League and aspirant to the throne of the Valois; followed the day after by the assassination of his brother, the Cardinal of Lorraine, a most haughty and unscrupulous churchman and politician.

The imbecile Henry III., forsaken by everyone, tottering on his throne, and alarmed at the popularity of his distinguished generalissimo, more a king than himself in all the requisites of royalty, convoked the States-General. The Guises were to be present at the parliament, and Henry, the better to conceal his perfidy to these princes, partook of the communion with them before the consummation of

his hellish plot, of which tradition has handed down the minutest details. To the traveller is yet pointed out everything connected with those ill-omened horrors—the chamber of Catherine de Medicis, the cabinet of Henry III., where he had distributed the daggers to Loignac and his bravos, the room where the great Balafré fell pierced with more than forty wounds, and the outer apartment where the soulless king brutally spurned the dead body of his illustrious victim. Retributive fate thus ended the life of the murderer of Admiral Coligny, which, in thirteen short days, was followed by the death, in delirium, of Catherine de Medicis, ripe in years as in crime; and, in less than seven months after, a monk's poignard took off (August 2, 1589) the worthless Henry, the Last of the Valois Kings.

On the accession to the throne of the House of Bourbon, Blois lost its importance, Henry of Navarre choosing Paris for his residence, though he often occupied this old castle on his way to his disaffected southern provinces. Subsequently it was mainly used as a place of exile for distinguished State prisoners like Marie de Medicis, widow of Henry IV. and regent after his assassination, though Louis XIV. and other noted personages occasionally occupied it. The revolutionists, in 1793, destroyed all emblems of royalty which decorated the chateau; then it became an infantry barracks; was restored by the government in 1845-48, and presented to the Prince Imperial in 1861; and in the Franco-German war was used for a hospital. What a varied drama of history has it had since the days of the Gauls and the Romans!

At Blois the levée, along the right bank of the Loire, assumes colossal proportions, and upon its broad top is constructed the railroad down the river. Opposite Onzain

station, on a rocky eminence on the left bank of the river, is the picturesque Chateau de Chaumont, with machicolated towers, forming three sides of a square and reflecting its wealth of architecture in the river at its base.

This imposing castle cannot better be described than in the words of the Vicomte Walsh :

“The porch, or portico,” says he, “is flanked on either side by two noble towers defending the entrance; hence start two slopes, or declivities, at either extremity of which stand two fortified towers; that on the right still retains upon its *crénelles* the astrological and cabalistic signs of the Queen Medicis, whose name it bears; that on the left is called ‘La Tour d’Amboise.’ * * * * A noble avenue dividing the green-sward now covering the outer moat, which has been filled up, leads in a straight line up to the portico; the large doors are of ancient oak, and on the panels we discern some extremely curious early carving, representing the twelve apostles. If we follow this avenue, we have on our right ‘La Promenade des Mottes,’ otherwise called ‘Le Mail de la Reine,’ planted with fine old elms and limes; on the left a wild ravine, rude and untamed, where the rugged oaks have grown spontaneously between the clefts of the stone.”

The earlier history of the former castle on this site is stamped with the rapacity and sanguinary characteristics of feudal times, when might made right and spread bloody desolation on every side. We will not attempt to narrate the feuds and valorous exploits of those days. Suffice it to say that this famous stronghold was razed to the ground and rebuilt in the latter part of the twelfth century. Here Cardinal Amboise, the wise Minister of Louis XII., was born; the Prince de Condé, after the battle of Dreux, was

confined ; Voltaire wrote part of “*La Pucelle*” ; and Catherine de Medicis spent much of her time, as usual, in casting horoscopes to conform to her infernal designs against her enemies. After the death of her husband, Henry II., she compelled his once all-powerful mistress to exchange her bijou chateau of Chenonceau for Chaumont, but Diane de Poitiers regarded it with superstitious awe as an ill-omened spot, and never occupied it. In the days of Napoleon I., Madame de Staël resided here in exile for ten years till the restoration of the Bourbons.

Below Chaumont is Amboise, the favorite abode of the warrior king, Charles VIII., on the site of a Roman camp at the confluence of the Amasse and Loire, here divided into two arms embracing the Island of Saint-Jean. As seen from the right bank of the broad river, with this pretty island for a foreground, the half-ruined bridge uniting it to the village of quaint old houses embowered in foliage, and the lofty sombre rock behind crowned with the majestic castle, all together form a picture full of romantic beauty.

The famous Chateau of Amboise, now much reduced in extent, once encircled the flat summit of an elevated rock, nearly precipitous, except the part occupied by the northern terrace facing the Loire. It was a vast and powerful citadel with high perpendicular battlemented walls. Enormous towers, 90 feet high and 42 in diameter, were at either extremity, which sprung from the base of the rock, and through which, on a spiral ramp, carriages could ascend. Subterranean galleries were cut in the solid base, and machicoulis projections and turrets commanded every approach of an enemy. The interior of the chateau retains no traces of its antiquity and few architectural attractions ; but the Chapel of St. Hubert, within the well-kept gardens,

light, graceful and delicately ornamented, is in striking contrast to the heavy, massive, imposing and almost gloomy aspect of the castle. This exquisite morsel of florid Gothic was built by Charles VIII., as a token of his affection for Anne of Brittany, and is dedicated to the saint. His miraculous meeting with the stag, bearing the legendary cross between its antlers, is curiously carved over the rich doorway. This and the delicate decorations within seem rather to be executed in ivory than in stone; but the stained Sèvres glass of its windows would be more in keeping with a lady's boudoir than with this gem of sculpture of the fifteenth century.

The chief attractions of Amboise are its eighteen centuries of historic associations, during which occurred many tragic scenes; sieges and battles; bloody butcheries and Machiavelian plots; pompous ceremonials and sumptuous fêtes; and some noted births, marriages and deaths.

Except the treaty between Clovis and Alaric, King of the Visigoths, made in 504 on the Island of Saint-Jean, little of interest occurred at Amboise before the fifteenth century, except that it had been twice sacked. Charles VIII. was born, in 1470, in this castle, and here he was accidentally killed. He was succeeded by Louis XII., who divorced his wife to marry Anne of Brittany, the widow of his predecessor. At Amboise, in the genial sunshine of the love of a devoted mother and idolized sister, Francis I. spent his youth, and in his manhood (1539) here, with Lucullus splendor, he received his cruel jailor, Charles V. of Germany, to whom, with a magnanimity which nothing could surpass, he granted a safe passage through his dominions to the "Fayre Citie of Ghent," then in revolt.

Francis II., who succeeded to the throne of France when

his father Henry II. was killed in a tournament, married, while still a boy, the Scottish rosebud—Marie Stuart—whose renowned beauty, winning manners, and tragic death have filled so many pages of exciting history. The young sovereigns, in 1559, made their brilliant entrance into this their majestic castle; but the pageantry and fêtes, which then graced their advent, had, in a few brief months, an appalling sequel. The Guises, supported by the queen-mother, Catherine de Medicis, the Jezebel of her age, were then the true masters of France. The Huguenots, who desired to extricate the young king from the fangs of this monster, formed what is known as the “Conjuration d’Amboise.” The secret of the plot was betrayed by one of the conspirators, and its leader, La Renaudie, was seized and hung upon a gibbet in the centre of the bridge in front of the castle. The remainder of the conspirators were captured, and the triumvirate of Guises and Medicis wreaked their bloody vengeance upon more than twelve hundred victims. The carnage was frightful, the streets were filled with dead bodies, the public places were crowded with scaffolds, blood ran in torrents, and the Loire was choked with corpses. From among the crowds of prisoners, tied together and driven like cattle to the shambles, were reserved the chiefs, who were to be executed, on the northern terrace, for the entertainment of the court. Catherine led the way to the windows o’erlooking the horrid scene, while the Cardinal de Guise designated the victims. The young sovereigns, the younger princes, the entire nobility, and the whole garrison occupying the roofs and every coigne of observation, were compelled to be witnesses of the brutal butchery. Before the densely packed lines of prisoners was erected a scaffold, covered

with black, on which stood an executioner masked and robed in red. Prisoner after prisoner was despatched, till the wearied headsman was compelled to yield his axe to another. When the butchery was over, Catherine, to whom this was rapture, commanded that the remains of the chief conspirators should be hung in chains from the iron balustrades of the stone balcony on the north front of the castle, facing the river. Over this dizzy height of a hundred feet, the headless bodies dangled and swayed, to and fro, in the wind, till the stench became so overwhelming that even Catherine was obliged to leave the chateau and escape, with Francis and Mary, to Chenonceau. Such was the prelude to the more horrible tragedy of St. Bartholomew in 1572.

Amboise henceforth ceased to be an abode of pleasure to become a state-prison. The first who were condemned to occupy its gloomy cells were the near relatives of the Guises, who had just triumphed. After them came the Marquis of Vieuville, in 1624 ; the Princes of Vendôme, natural sons of Henry IV., in 1646; Fouquet and Lauzun, in 1661 ; and, finally, Abd-el-Kadir, till released by Louis Napoleon, in 1852. To these hoary towers and ancient battlements, as to other kingly habitations, came the terrible and devastating Revolution to pursue with rage every souvenir of royalty. During the Consulate of Napoleon, Sièyes and Roger-Ducos, the latter destroyed much of the castle and the church of Saint Florentin, giving as an excuse for his vandalism that he was frightened at the necessity of repairing and keeping these long-neglected structures in good condition. The Comte de Paris who inherits the castle, as the descendant of the Ducs de Penthièvre, is restoring it ; but the town of Amboise is now only a city of tanneries,

all memorials of Charles VIII., Louis XII., Francis I., Charles V., Leonardo da Vinci, and other great names having been obliterated.

Near the famous chateau are the Granaries of Cæsar, made by excavating the solid rock, or by enlarging natural fissures, which were the storehouses for his vast supplies of corn after conquering the Gallic confederation; the Church of Saint Denis, in the circular style of the twelfth century, containing a well-executed terra-cotta group, representing the entombment of the Saviour; and the Chateau de Cloux-Lucé, where Leonardo da Vinci lived the last two years of his life.

In the forest of Amboise once stood the magnificent Chateau of Chanteloup, built in the thirteenth century by order of the Princess des Ursins, who, not content with tacitly reigning in Spain, had the ambitious project of profiting by the peace of Utrecht to secure for herself a small sovereignty in the Netherlands contiguous to the French frontier, which she expected to exchange for one in La Touraine. So sure was she, that she purchased a site near Amboise, and sent orders to erect upon it a vast and superb edifice with immense inner courts, extensive grounds, beautiful gardens and magnificent furniture. The fall of this aspiring woman prevented her from occupying the chateau, which became the property of her daughter, whose husband sold it in 1760 to the Duke of Choiseul. Ten years later this distinguished Prime-Minister was banished by Louis XV., but his journey to his estate was a magnificent triumphal procession. To mark the success of his popularity he caused, in 1775-78, a grand monument, in the form of a Chinese pagoda, to be built from materials from the Chateau de la Bourdaisière, in which Gabrielle d'Estrées was born.

It was about 130 feet high, in seven stories, diminishing in diameter to the top one, whose conical apex, crowned with a gilt ball, is still visible at a great distance over the surrounding forest. On the death of the Duke this chateau became the property of the Crown, and subsequently was given to the Duke of Penthièvre. After the Revolution it belonged to Count Chaptal, the distinguished chemist and Minister of Napoleon I., who established here a refinery of beet sugar. It was demolished in 1830 by "*la bande noire*," so that nothing remains now to recall the great Prime-Minister, except his pagoda monument, in the first story of which are inscribed, on a marble table, the names of his illustrious visitors during his banishment.

Proceeding ten miles southwestwardly we reach the picturesque valley of the Cher, filled with souvenirs of art, literature and history, at every step stumbling o'er memories of the past, hearing from every ruin the echo of great names, and listening to every wind to bring back the refrain of some battle-cry of the departed days of chivalry.

Suddenly, on reaching the Cher, there rises before us the half palace, half chateau of Chenonceau, unique alike in its situation, construction and history. It is still as fresh and beautiful as when, on the death of Henry II., the fair Diane de Poitiers was compelled to abandon her favorite retreat to the terrible Catherine de Medicis, who, since her wedding day, had coveted this Naboth's vineyard. This venerable monument of the Renaissance, spanning the river and confronting us with memories of mediæval days, is a picturesque mass of lofty walls, peaked roofs, ornate chimneys, beetling towers, hanging balconies, bold buttresses, pillared arches, graceful doorways and pointed turrets.

To see Chenonceau from its most advantageous point of

view, the lover of art should survey it from the south bank of the Cher, below the outer court and diagonally opposite to its donjon. Here the chateau, bridging the river and displaying two of its faces, appears in all its grandeur. The eye wanders with delight over the great square pavilion which majestically rises, above the waters, upon the graceful bridge connecting it with the left bank ; and upon the long façade of the gallery which reaches to the opposite shore. The square pavilion, built upon two enormous bridge-piers and their connecting arch, is protected at the angles by projecting towers, producing a charming effect, and its lofty roof is crowned with rich dormer-windows, pointed pinnacles and sculptured chimneys. Such was the primitive, beautiful chateau as designed by Bohier. The bridge which now connects it to the north shore has three unequal arches supported upon massive piers, beneath which we see reflected in the water the charming landscape beyond, while the chateau itself seems a fantastic castle floating in mid-air and mirroring itself in the glassy stream below. The lower gallery, built over these three arches since the erection of the original structure, is two hundred feet long, and its façade is artistically broken up by three colossal semi-circular hollow buttresses pierced with arched windows, which rise from the ends of the bridge-piers to the height of the first story of the gallery. But, notwithstanding this relief to its monotony, this new addition appears somewhat heavy, and is in striking contrast with the grace and delicacy of the Bohier pavilion.

Before we reach the drawbridge of the castle there boldly rises before us the stately tower of the twelfth century, at that time only a simple manor belonging to the family of the Marques—an Auvergnat race of ancient renown, wealth

and power. With its conical lantern roof, and its lesser engaged-towers on its circumference, it is a striking object and greatly heightens the effect of the castellated front of the pavilion.

The details of the chateau are as beautiful as the masses are grand. The jutting towers with their conical roofs, no longer needed for defence, become imposing ornaments ; the noble entrance, once a castle gate, has now sculptured doors beneath a hanging balcony ; projecting machicolis are transformed into corbeled entablatures ; protuberant bartazans have changed to decorative turrets ; its dormers have ceased to be lookouts upon the enemy, and even the chimneys, the despair of architects, are culminations of loveliness. In fine, the palace has usurped the purposes of the fortress, and the river, no longer needed as moat and defence, is now but the crystal mirror glassing its kaleidoscope beauties and mould of form.

We will not enter into a detailed description of its interior apartments, which, as in most palaces, have their fine sculptures, delicate arabesques, frescoed ceilings and a profusion of carvings. The throne-room ; Gothic chapel, with its beautiful tribune ; fine library ; grand stairway ; vaulted hall, hung with armor ; and even the kitchens, are worthy of observation. Most of its old furniture, cabinets, china, enamels and glass are still preserved, as also the drinking-cup of Francis I. and the Venetian mirror and rich furniture of Mary, Queen of Scots, when wife of Francis II.

The history of Chenonceau is very interesting. At the beginning of the thirteenth century, or earlier, the seignior of Chenonceau was possessed by the family of the Marques. During the many succeeding years of domestic and foreign warfare, Chenonceau was burned, and in 1432

the great advanced tower, as we now see it, was built. One of the descendants of the Marques also built in front of it a defensive water-mill commanding the Cher. When the Marques became embarrassed in their finances, Chenonceau was sold to Thomas Bohier, Chancellor of the Exchequer, who, in 1515, began a new chateau, on the site of the ancient edifice and mill, in the French Renaissance style. In 1535 it was purchased by the Crown, and became a royal residence. Henry II. gave it to his mistress Diane de Poitiers, with the title of Duchess de Valentinois, who continued the building by extending the bridge to the north bank of the river, and erecting thereon a handsome, but less quaint and attractive, two-story structure, thereby to render it the rival of the most gorgeous of the royal palaces. Hither her royal lover used to repair after hunting in the neighboring forest. Her initial, D, joined with his, H—thus DI—was everywhere to be seen; but, in the midst of her labors of tasteful embellishment of the chateau and its exterior by adding a vast parterre of lawns and flower-beds ornamented with groves, grottos and fountains in the Italian style, the King was killed in a tournament. The unscrupulous and irritated Catherine de Medicis, now possessed of supreme power, at once compelled Diane, in the midst of the improvements of her fairy kingdom, to exchange her exquisite chateau for the less attractive one of Chaumont.

Upon the succession of the queen-mother to Chenonceau, it was for thirty years (1559–89) the arena of festivities, pleasures and artistic works. The fêtes began soon after the terrible days of Amboise, which we have narrated. To withdraw the young King and Queen from the horrid memories of recent bloody butcheries, the queen-mother took

them to the bright palace and sunny gardens of Chenonceau, where they had a splendid reception. Triumphal arches, monumental columns and statues, leaping fountains, antique altars, fireworks and the thunders of artillery, all kinds of courtly devices and poetic inscriptions, contributed greatly to give to this fête the stamp of magnificence, novelty and refined art. The long gallery on the bridge was one vast banqueting hall, and through its open windows came the perfumes of flowers, voluptuous music, and the merry voices of revellers. Among the distinguished throng was the arch demon herself—Catherine de Medicis—and her “*escadron volant*” of forty fair frailties designed to serve her political intrigues by fascinating alike Huguenots and Catholics. Next of note was Marguerite, her sparkling daughter, who was forbidden to love the handsome and renowned Balafré, Duc de Guise, then seeking her, because it suited the mother’s selfish schemes that she should become the Aspasia wife of Henry of Navarre. The young sovereigns, a bevy of princes, and many nobles in richest vestments were present. Tasso, sad and careworn, was there, with other famous poets; and cardinals, courtiers and many other noted characters graced the brilliant assemblage. The grand banquet to celebrate the ascent of Henry III. to the throne, and the after displays of magnificence, which followed at brief intervals, it is unnecessary to detail.

Catherine de Medicis was much attached to Chenonceau, where she spent most of the time she could spare from intrigues and state affairs. She had brought from Italy masterpieces of statuary and painting, and made the most lavish expenditures to adorn this superb chateau and its parks and gardens. Upon her death, she bequeathed

the whole property to the widow of her son, Henry III., who, for a time, was dispossessed of it by the creditors of the estate, but she finally redeemed it by the sale of her jewels. Upon the demise of Louise de Lorraine it fell into the possession of the Duchesse de Vendôme and the Condés; in 1720, it was sold to the Duc de Bourbon, Prime Minister of Louis XV., and, in 1733, became the property of Charles Dupin, *fermier-general*. Under the latter and his accomplished wife, Chenonceau was again a brilliant abode, where all the literary men of the time assembled, notably Buffon, Condillac, Fontenelle, Bernardin de St. Pierre, Voltaire, Bolingbroke and Rousseau. Owing to the respect which the aged Madame Dupin commanded, this chateau escaped the fate of most other royal residences during the days of the iconoclasts of the French Revolution. The chateau now belongs to Comte René, grandson of Madame Dupin.

From Chenonceau we proceeded south to Saint-Quentin, on the summit of a hill overlooking a most lovely landscape. Now crossing the Indre we traverse the wild forest, once the hunting ground of royalty, and debouch from it upon Loches, one of the most picturesque towns in Touraine. It rises in terraces each dominated by striking monuments, the lowest by the Chateau of Louis XII., with its fine towers; the second by the Collegiate Church of Notre Dame and its four pointed pyramids; while the imposing old donjon crowns its summit. Passing over velvet lawns, through beautiful gardens, among quaint old houses, and near the remains of the Gallo-Roman aqueduct of Contré, we enter Loches by the gate of the Cordeliers, standing like the ruins of a small feudal fortress with draw-bridge, porteullised entrance, machicoulis defences, loop-

holed towers flanking its four faces, and high-pointed roofs gracefully terminating the whole.

Loches, probably founded before the days of Cæsar, after belonging to the first kings of the French monarchy, passed in feudal times under the domination of the dukes of Aquitaine, and then under that of the turbulent counts of Anjou, who added much to its fortifications. From the accession of Henry II. to the throne of England, the Chateau of Loches belonged to the Plantagenet kings; was taken, in 1194, by Richard Cœur de Leon, after his captivity, from his brother, John Lackland; and was finally, in 1206, reunited to the French crown by Philip Augustus. It was occupied and considerably enlarged by Charles VII., Louis XI., Charles VIII., Louis XII., Francis I. (who here received Charles V. of Germany, December 12, 1539, on his way through France), Henry II. and Charles IX., with whom, in 1571, came his mother Catherine de Medicis and Henry of Navarre.

The castle consists of a pile of buildings of various ages from the year 1000. The most conspicuous is the vast square Donjon with massive walls, rising at the extremity of a rocky plateau to the height of 120 feet and overhanging the precipice. Attached to it is a smaller and lower one serving as the stairway entrance to the four stories of the donjon; and beside it rises a picturesque group of towers of the thirteenth century, in one of which are the dungeons of Louis XI., four stories deep. Two of them contain the iron cages invented by Cardinal Balue, who himself was confined in one of them for eight years; and in another Lodovico Sforza, the Duke of Milan, was a prisoner till he died. In these gloomy, grated dungeons many other illustrious men passed years of misery terminated only by their cruel exe-

cution. These dread abodes of human torture existed as living graves of their victims till the beginning of the French Revolution.

There are many other interesting architectural remains in and about this bastile of sighs and tears; the most interesting, perhaps, being the black marble tomb of the devoted mistress to Charles VII., the beautiful Agnes Sorel, upon which lies her recumbent statue with two angels supporting the head, and two lambs, symbolical of her gentleness, crouched at the feet.

To the east of Loches are the Chateaux of Sansac and Montresor, and the ruins of Charteuse du Liget, founded, in 1176, by Henry II., of England, to expiate the murder of Thomas á Becket; but we must pass them by and hasten to Tours through the valley of the Indre, one of the most fertile regions of Touraine, known even to the Romans, who here built their habitations in the midst of crystal waters, emerald meadows, groves vocal with birds, and swelling hills fringing the stream. At Courçay the river runs through a narrow cañon of steepy and savage rocks alive with noisy torrents. At Cormery, we pass its pretty white stone cottages nestling among the shadows of the venerable ruins of its moss-grown abbey; and beyond, the landscape is delicious till we reach the arid plain of Montbazou, whose only monument is its old chateau, this being one of the girdle of castles which enveloped Tours during the fierce and bloody contests between the houses of Blois and Anjou.

We have now reached the capital of Touraine, the Arcadia of France, through which flows the yellow Loire, its four great tributaries, and a multitude of little affluents, giving fertility to this garden land basking in beauty. Every-

where are pastoral valleys filled with villages and hamlets embowered in verdure; hillsides glowing with purple grapes and ripening fruits; gardens and flowers enameling the plains; battlements and chateaux crowning almost every height; ruins and abbeys covered with creeping vines; vistas and landscapes of loveliness perpetually opening to view; and happy inhabitants rejoicing in the mildness of their clime, the production of everything sacred to Ceres and Bacchus, the grandeur of their monuments, and the antiquity of their history.

Tours was a city of the Gauls, probably a century before the conquest of Cæsar. The Romans held it till 480, and then the Visigoths till 506, when it fell into the hands of Clovis. His successors remained masters of it till 940. Then followed the feudal struggles and wars with England till 1205, when France resumed her sovereignty over this fair domain.

Modern Tours, amid dust and glare and with half of its former population, is situated on the left bank of the Loire and occupies the charming plain between that river and the Cher, which is intersected by broad streets with fine shops and residences on either side. Its public structures are the imposing Gothic cathedral with two lofty towers, founded in 1170 upon the site of a very ancient church; the almost extinct Roman amphitheatre, nearly equal in size to the Coliseum; the ruins of the Gallo-Roman works, which rendered their first service against the Visigoths in 428, and from one of whose remaining towers the Duc de Guise, son of Balafré, escaped in 1591; the two famous towers, the last remnants of the celebrated and vast basilica of St. Martin, so intimately connected with the history of Clovis, Charlemagne and other sover-

eigns of France ; the well-preserved church of St. Julien, where Henry III., after the murders at Blois and the death of Catherine de Medicis, convened his parliament in 1589, during the troubles of the League ; the Hotel Gouin, a fine specimen of domestic renaissance architecture of the fifteenth century ; and the House of Tristan, the ill-omened executioner of Louis XI., ornamented with cord-mouldings, emblematic of his profession. Near the Hotel de Ville and Musée is the fine statue of Descartes fronting the great stone bridge across the Loire, which leads us to the northern bank upon which are the crumbling foundations of the once magnificent Abbey of Marmouëtier.

To the west of Tours, on the vast plain between the Cher and Loire, stand the ruins of the former simple and severe Chateau du Plessis-les-Tours, the castellated den of the timorous tyrant and bloody bigot—Louis XI.—whose character is so admirably delineated by Walter Scott in “*Quentin Durward*.” Most of his days, after his coronation, here lived this strange and unique figure of history, made up of contrasts, powerful by sheer force of intellect, unscrupulous in the employment of means, and pursuing success as a passion. His contemporaries named him the “universal spider,” living in the centre of his web and extending its threads in every direction to secure his prey. He was an absolute king, austere in manners, and without uprightness of character, goodness of heart, or greatness of soul. Implacably he hunted down his enemies and revelled in the vengeance he inflicted upon them, as shown by his treatment of Cardinal Balue, whom he caused to be imprisoned for eleven years in iron cages so small that he could neither stand up nor lay down in them. Louis had many of these cages in his various castles, and he did not

disdain to be their constructor, he having, under his own eye, no less than three forges in his Chateau of Plessis for their fabrication, which work, and witnessing fights between cats and rats, constituted his only pastimes. At last this so-called "most Christian King," with no familiar save Tristan, his chief hangman, devoured by fear and ennui, and drinking the blood of young children to restore his strength, felt the end of his crafty and vindictive career approaching. In sight of the avenue of gibbets leading to his castle, his "reign of terror" terminated August 31, 1483, he dying utterly detested, unhonored and unmourned. However, it must be said to the credit of this monster of cruelty that to his superior mind was greatly due the overthrow of the feudal aristocracy, the formation of a stable government, and the union of the entire French nation.

Plessis was the place of reconciliation of Charles VIII. with the Duke of Orleans, afterward Louis XII.; in 1506, here was held the convocation of the States General which annulled the engagement of Claude of France with the future Emperor of Germany, Charles V., and affianced her to Francis of Valois, thereby changing the destiny of nations; and here took place the reconciliation of Henry III. with the King of Navarre, which ended the civil war.

This famous chateau, in 1778, became a poorhouse; was sold and partially demolished during the revolution of 1789; and of the ruins of this sombre and terrible abode of Louis XI., once hedged around with every defensive device, now only a few fragments remain to tell that here lived a tyrant "whose sole name blisters our tongues."

Descending the Loire, the landscape, seen from the summit of the right bank levée, is ravishing. Balzac, with the pencil of an artist, has described this panorama of spark-

ling waters, green isles, rocky hills, white cottages, fertile fields, rich vineyards, fruitful orchards, flowering gardens and far-off forests.

From an opening of a valley on the north, backed by lime cliffs pierced with cave dwellings, is seen upon their summit the Castle of Luynes and its bold flanking towers. The primitive chateau probably had succeeded to a Roman camp, and at length became the residence of the Seigneurs of Luynes. Not far off are the ruins of a Roman aqueduct, of which eight arches and fifty piers remain.

Passing by the Church of Savonniers, from which are exquisite views of the Cher and Loire, and of the unartistic but beautifully located Chateau of Villandry, we come to the railroad bridge spanning, with its nineteen arches, the broad Loire. Nearly opposite is "*La Pile de Saint-Mars*," a strange, square brick tower, almost a hundred feet high, which is an enigma to archæologists. Some consider it a memorial of the conquest of the country by Cæsar; and others see in it a monument to Quintus Marcus, a Roman officer who died on the expedition. The name of "Cinq-Mars" may be a corruption of the latter name, or be derived from "*quinque Martis*"—five sons of Mars who fell here.

Near-by are the two dismantled round-towers and the gateway between of the old Chateau of Saint-Mars, which gave a title to the handsome, shallow and ambitious favorite of Louis XIII., who dropped the patronymic of "Cinq-Mars," and was known at Court as "Monsieur le Grand," one of the most noted personages of France. Young and thoughtless, confident of favor, arrogant in power, this spoiled and scented darling of the court made many enemies of those envious of his good fortune, especially of the

implacable Richelieu, who feared him, but whose crafty cunning soon found the means of bringing this upstart to the scaffold, and subsequently of destroying his castle, save its gate-towers which yet remain to point out the once gay abode of the dashing though weak Grand Seneschal of France.

After passing villages of caves cut in the yellow chalk bluffs, we reach Langeais, where the Romans doubtless established a camp, upon the site of which a castle was built towards the end of the tenth century. This strategic position continued to be occupied and later became an important stronghold of the province. The present picturesque chateau was built about the middle of the thirteenth century, and was given by Louis XI. to the Count of Dunois and Longueville, son of the celebrated bastard of Orleans. After its completion, the marriage of Charles VIII. with Anne of Brittany took place (1491), an event which united that important province to France. With trifling exceptions, this chateau was skilfully restored by M. Baron, and now, with its high crenelated walls, imposing towers, boldly projecting machicoulis and military architecture, presents, despite its ugly chimneys, a striking effect. The apartments are well furnished, contain many works of art, and the terrace commands fine views over the valley of the Loire.

About seven miles south of Langeais, upon an island in the Indre, is the small Chateau of Azay-le-Rideau, an exquisite gem of the architecture of the reign of Francis I., floating like a halcyon nest amid reeds and water-lilies, and reposing in security almost buried in luxuriant foliage. Less original in plan than Chenonceau, less striking in *ensemble* than Chambord, and less imposing in situation

than Amboise, it is of a purer type than any of those of the early sixteenth century French Renaissance. It is two stories in height, with a lower wing. The principle façade is terminated below the eaves by a kind of projecting entablature resembling a machicoulis gallery; its embellished high dormers, and sculptured chimneys decorate the roof; and bold round towers, supported by heavy brackets, grace the angles of the edifice. The dignity and delicacy of its outlines, and breadth of its design; the elevation of its roofs and their vertical appendages; and the finish and taste of all its details—constitute a charming aggregation. Over the chief portal, enriched with sculpture and combinations of three classic orders, is the salamander of Francis I., with the motto “*Nutrio et extinguo.*” All the parts of its splendid portico are crowned with arabesques, in which the sculptor seems to have exhausted all the delicacy of his chisel and the fantasies of his imagination.

Returning to Longeais and descending the Loire, we rapidly pass the Chateau of Planchoury; St. Michel, perched on a height; the new Church of St. Patrice; and the Chateau of Rochecotta, in which was born the Chouan leaders of that name. From a summit near the latter we enjoy a splendid panorama. The eye takes in much of the valley of the Loire, and follows the course of the great river sprinkled with verdant isles; and in front we look up the glassy Indre to the towers of Azay-le-Rideau, its northern bank covered with vineyards and fertile fields and the southern one by the sombre masses of the forest of Chinon, above which tower the roofs and spires of distant villages, thus producing a striking picture of the blended beauties of nature and art.

Lower down, upon a wooded plateau, rises, among many

silver streamlets, the imposing Chateau of Ussé, which belonged to the younger brother of the Vendean hero—Roche-Jaquelein. This sumptuous dwelling was partly rebuilt early in the sixteenth century, more in the heavy Gothic than in the light Renaissance style. Its two massive groups of ponderous towers enclosing an interior court, with its pavilions, turrets and machicoulis galleries, give it rather the aspect of a baronial castle than of a modern habitation. The illustrious Vauban, the great military engineer of Louis XIV., was here often upon a visit to his eldest daughter, who married into the family owning the chateau, which probably will account, in some manner, for its fortress style.

Passing by many thriving villages in the broad productive valley of the Loire, we reach the Chateau des Réaux, formerly named Plessis-Rideau, a charming little castle with prominent towers, graceful elevated roofs, and walls checkered alternately with blocks of red brick and white stone. It was sold, in 1650, to Gédéon Tallemant des Réaux, the well-known publisher of novels, from whom it takes its name.

At Cande, opposite the mouth of the Vienne and where Touraine terminates, stands the grand and sacred basilica of St. Martin covering the spot where the venerable prelate died. From here, ascending the fertile valley of this great tributary of the Loire, we see on every side a glorious panorama of hills, hamlets, meadows, vineyards, walnut groves, forests and rocks, and on every height windmills, elegant villas, or historic chateaux. Among the latter, towards the South, is that of Coudray-Montpensier, with its high-peaked towers and bold machicolis defences. It has

had numerous owners, and, in 1545, was presented by Francis I. to his Grand Master of the Wardrobe. Near here, in the commune of Seuilly, Rabelais was born, in 1493, and in a neighboring abbey received his early education from the monks whom he afterwards mercilessly satirized.

About ten miles up the Vienne we reach the extensive ruins of Chinon, occupying the summit of a rocky plateau, rising abruptly above the town and river. As we look upon its great donjon, its dismantled walls, its crumbling towers, and its vineclad curtains, reflected in the Vienne and outlined upon the sky, the mind is oppressed with the silence of its centuries of history and its dread desolation amid such a smiling landscape, now radiant with prosperity and busy life.

Steep cliffs or vertical walls on three sides, and on the fourth a deep cut through the promontory upon the extremity of which the castle is built, prevented the possibility of its escalade, while deep broad ditches separate its three enceintes. The interior one, or citadel, still retains its postern gateway, flanked by a tower, called the *Tour de l'Horloge*, which is over seventy feet high. In the only part now inhabited are shown the royal apartments, in one of which Joan of Arc had her interview with the apathetic Charles VII., who, though plainly clad, she singled out as by instinct, from the crowd of magnificently attired courtiers.

The Castle of Chinon was founded before the establishment of the French monarchy. The Visigoths possessed it till the defeat of Alaric, when it fell into the hands of Clovis. After belonging to the crown for three centuries, Thibaut le Tricheur became its master, and by him it was much

enlarged. The Counts of Blois possessed it from 914 to 1044, when it passed to the Counts of Anjou, who, in virtue of their title, kept it till 1151, and as kings of England, till 1205, when Philip Augustus captured it after a valiant defence by Lasey, a brave knight who had accompanied Richard Cœur de Leon to the Holy Land. Chinon, again united to the crown, became an appanage of the queens and princes of the blood, and was alienated in 1631 by a subterfuge of Richelieu, who, as Prime Minister, sold it to be himself the purchaser. His family allowed this celebrated and venerable castle to go to ruin; but the great events of its history cannot perish. Here died two English kings—Henry II. and Richard Cœur de Leon; here lived ten kings of France—Philip Augustus, St. Louis, Charles VII., Louis XI., Charles VIII., Louis XII., Henry II., Henry IV., &c. Among its governors was Philippe de Comines, the historian; and in the number of its prisoners were the wife of Robert, Count of Artois, Geoffroy le Barbu (delivered by Pope Urban II.), Jacques de Molay, Grand Master of the Templars, with five great dignitaries of the order, 150 Jews, accused of poisoning the wells, and 389 Vendéans, who, the morning after their confinement, were slaughtered to appease the vengeance of the revolutionary vigilance committee of 1793.

“ Beneath these battlements, within those walls
Power dwelt amidst her passions; in proud state
Each robber chief upheld his armed halls,
Doing his evil will, nor less elate
Than mightier heroes of a longer date.”

South of Chinon once stood the magnificent Chateau of Champigny, a *chef-d'œuvre* of French renaissance, filled

with works of art ; but all, save the chapel with its exquisite stained glass windows, were destroyed by order of Richelieu.

Still further south, the great Cardinal built, in the now dead city of Richelieu, another stupendous pile. It rose as by enchantment, and was filled with every thing which money and power could command ; but its marbles, its paintings, and precious things have all perished or are scattered throughout the realm. Of that vast chateau, the wonder of the age, naught remains save a few insignificant fragments, and its sole dwellers are the howling winds sweeping o'er its desolation, the mousing owl hooting in the rents of ruin, and noisome reptiles crawling among the rank weeds choking its spacious courts. Silence and decay now mark the birthplace of the proud, arrogant and unprincipled statesman whose life was devoted to his own aggrandisement and what he called "the Glory of France" ; but it was a mean and selfish glory, to attain which he waded through the noblest blood of the land, and then died a hypocrite, declaring that he had no enemies save those of the State. Yet this ruler of Louis XIII. and despot of France would not choose to have his epitaph written by the chivalrous Montmorenci, the poetic Chalais, the gallant Cinq-Mars, the witty St. Prioul, and, above all, by the wife of his sovereign, Anne of Austria, whom he tried to seduce and then to banish and utterly ruin.

Returning to the Loire we are soon near Saumur, once the stronghold of Protestantism, where is still seen, beneath the cupola of the Church of Notre Dame d'Ardilliers an inscription by Louis XIV. celebrating the suppression of heresy throughout his dominions, and the

extirpation of its followers—a subject rather of shame than of boast, on a spot which suffered in turn the Massacre of St. Bartholomew, the atrocities of the Dragonnades, and finally ruin from the revocation of the Edict of Nantes.

Saumur is a small, cheerful and bright city. Seen from the river it is very picturesque, with, in the foreground, the Hotel de Ville, a quaint building with peaked roof and turreted angles ; and, behind, the city spires and towers, and the overhanging fine old castle and its tall donjon. The town is the seat of the great cavalry-school of the French army, and carries on much trade in agricultural produce. In 1793, the brave Vendean army, led by the dashing Roche-Jacquelin, compelled its surrender and of 11,000 republicans, who were treated with a humanity strikingly in contrast with their own atrocious system of relentless massacre.

The vicinity of Saumur abounds in antiquities. The Cromlech of Bagneux, within a mile of the town, is the finest in all Anjou, being a chamber 64 feet long, made up of enormous stones, the largest of which is 24x21x2½ feet. Some twelve miles further to the southeast are several others ; but, far more famous than these are the remains of a magnificent abbey at Fontevault, the burial-place of Henry II. and Richard Cœur de Leon of England, but now used as a house of correction.

Below Saumur are the villages of Trèves, Cunault, Gennes, La Ménitré, and St. Maur, which are remarkable for their ruins of ecclesiastic and other old structures ; Les Ponts-de-Cé, on an island, strategically important because of the easy passage here of the Loire ; and La Pointe,

where the Maine, flowing from the north, adds its great volume to the waters of the Loire.

Black Angers, familiar to the readers of Shakespeare's King John—the cradle of the early Plantagenet monarchs, is five miles above the mouth of the Maine. Around the old city, in the midst of which is a magnificent cathedral, are now broad boulevards where once stood “the saucy walls” with “strong-barred gates,” “that as a waist did girdle it about,” when Philip of France threatened “those sleeping stones” with his “drift of bullets,” and John of England made ready with cannon, “full of wrath, to spit forth their iron indignation.” Its most venerable relic is its old castle, built by Louis IX. on the summit of a bold rock, which, notwithstanding the mutilations of Henry III. in 1535, is yet, perhaps, with its seventeen colossal towers, eighty feet high, the finest feudal castle in France. Angers has also its school of art industry, scientific societies, museums and colleges. In one of these latter were partly educated the Earl of Chatham and the Duke of Wellington. Angers has considerable commerce, and its foundries and sail-cloth manufactories are flourishing industries. Beyond the city stretch out in every direction fine suburbs, rich vineyards, gardens and nurseries, besides slate-quarries adding great wealth to this region.

Again descending the Loire, we pass Chalonnnes and its coal mines; the village of Champtoceaux, where Marshal Gilles de Retz, the legendary bluebeard, had his castle; the picturesque little town of St. Florent-le-Viel, with David's mausoleum of the Vendean hero, Bonchamps, mortally wounded at Chollet; Ancenis, where a fine sus-

pension bridge spans the Loire, and the remains of a castle of the Dukes of Béthune ; Oudon, a tall, black, octagonal tower of the thirteenth century ; and many other towns, hamlets and castellated ruins.

We have now reached the Lower Loire, with La Vendée on the south, and on the north the Department of Loire-Inferieure, which historically and geologically belongs to Brittany, though its commercial interests have alienated its peasantry from that province, and they no longer use the Breton language. Of La Vendée we will speak more at length after we have traversed the Loire.

We have, in our descent, reached tidewater, but the maritime estuary can be said to begin only about nine miles below Nantes, where the great river, swollen by the Eudre and Sèvre, give it a width of from one to three miles, though much obstructed by ever-shifting sand-bars and numerous islands.

Nantes, forty miles from the ocean, with a population of about 120,000, is the fourth seaport of France, and one of its handsomest cities. It takes its name from Namnetes, a Gallic tribe, and hence it antedates the Roman conquest. It boasts of its beautiful public park ; its fine gothic cathedral ; a modern palatial edifice containing the library, museum and art collections of the town ; its noble quays, lined with miles of handsome houses on one side, and fringed with shipping on the other ; and its venerable castle, in which for a time most of the kings of France since Charles VIII. have lived, in which Henry IV. signed his famous edict of 1598 (revoked by Louis XIV. in 1685), and from which the celebrated Cardinal de Retz made his escape in 1654.

In former times Nantes supplied the French West Indies with slaves; but even a sadder history came to it during the French Revolution. Here took place those terrible "Noyades" and "Republican marriages," the invention of the monster, Carrier, who, thirsting for more blood than the guillotine could supply, devised these schemes of wholesale death. Barges, filled with human victims, were taken to the middle of the Loire, where their trap-door bottoms were opened to sink in death their helpless freights. Thus were consigned to eternity by exulting savages from six to nine thousand men, women and children whose only crime was an ardent love of country.

The Republican marriages, and other refinements of the cruelty of these biped blood-hounds, consisted in binding, back to back, a naked man and woman, and after an hour's honeymoon in the blistering sun, hurling them into the Loire. To these barbarous atrocities were added the "Fusillades," which took place day after day on the Plain of St. Mauve, where at one time five hundred young children were mowed down by musketry and their corpses thrown pell-mell into the ditches. It is estimated that 30,000 innocent beings were in 1793 slaughtered here and in its vicinity.

The Vendean wars has also left some sad souvenirs at Nantes, Cathelineau having been mortally wounded, June 29, 1793, in the assault of this place, and Charette, another Royalist leader, was shot in April, 1796. The regicide Fouché, Police Minister of Napoleon I., was born at Nantes.

The environs of this city display great marks of opulence and prosperity in its numerous pretty villas and its busy factories.

Descending the Loire from Nantes, we pass Indre and the Island of Indret, with an old castle and a large manufactory of marine engines, belonging to the Government ; Couërou and its lead works ; Saveny, to the north, on a bluff commanding a magnificent view over the river's estuary, and noted as the place of the final defeat of the Vendean army under Roche-Jacquelein and Stofflet ; Pambœuf, now nearly abandoned for most commercial purposes ; and St. Nazaire, a town sprung up since 1856, around a Breton village at the mouth of the Loire, which now, by packet steamers, carries on a thriving trade with the West Indies and other parts of the world.

“ *Quel torrent révolutionnaire que cette Loire !* ” was the expression of the Jacobin Barrère. Both physically and historically the epithet is justified : physically, because of its unbridled impetuosity, tumbling o'er beetling crags and lava precipices in its upper volcanic valley, and of the desolating inundations, shifting shoals and treacherous quicksands of its lower course ; and historically, because on its banks direful plots have been laid, venomed vengeance has been king, and grim-visaged war has never smoothed its wrinkled front from the era of the Roman conquest to the bloody days of the massacres in La Vendée.

“ No mercy, no quarter, no prisoners, ” was the watchword of the Republican forces who marched against a peasantry of poachers and hunters, incited to resistance by their fanatical priests ; and occupying a land of marshes and ponds, intersected by dykes and canals, of copses and jungles cut up by rivulets and ravines, and with a subsoil pierced and traversed in all directions, like a madrepore,

by secret passages of cells, mines and galleries. Hence, for the enemy, all communication was difficult, while the natives in these shady hollow-ways could move unseen, at every turn pick off stragglers, and concentrate in their forest labyrinths against the unwary foe. In their palisaded fortresses of trees they were secure, from behind hedge-parapets they could deliver their deadly fire, and, if opportunity offered, they could sortie upon their assailants, and, if hard pressed, retreat in an instant to their hiding-places and there remain as silent as the spent avalanche. The invaders were made desperate, and soon every pathway was marked out with blood, the torch consumed every dwelling, and rapine and massacre stalked alike through hamlet and city. Then, suddenly, from every rank of life rose heroes like Cathelineau, Stofflet, Charette, d'Elbée, Bonchamps, Lescure and Roche-Jacquelein, who led these rural dwarfs, but giants in battle, for three years against the disciplined and victorious armies of France, until the youthful Hoche, with his two hundred thousand veterans, terminated this terrible tragedy of civil war, which had desolated the land and sacrificed hecatombs of brave men, loving mothers and innocent children.